Arthur. The beginning of the war with Japan opened a new page in the history of Russia.

There were rumors that the seizure of forests in the Yalu Valley by the Tsar's favorites, against the stern protests of Tokyo, was more than a foolish adventure; that the government had deliberately provoked the war with Japan in the hope that a quick victory could raise its prestige and help crush the revolutionary movement. This hope seemed to be satisfied in the first weeks of the war. Patriotic demonstrations, with the tricolor banners and the Tsar's portrait, took place in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and other cities. Students of St. Petersburg University knelt in the snow in front of the Winter Palace.

Very soon, however, the situation changed. Russia proved utterly unprepared for the war. It had only a single-track railroad over which to move troops to the Far East and supply them with food and munitions. The Russian army was routed on the Yalu, at Liao Yang, and finally at Mukden. The Russian fleets at Vladivostok and Port Arthur were annihilated. The defeats were particularly humiliating because of the boasting and contempt with which official Russian propaganda had branded the enemy as "macacos"—monkeys.

The people's wrath turned against the generals, the government, the Tsar. The war became more and more unpopular. Rumors circulated about treason in the High Command, and the poison of suspicion seeped into the army. The government felt the ground burning under its feet. Its domestic policy became increasingly erratic. Pogroms were followed by liberal gestures, liberal words by new acts of wanton violence.

The war was actually lost in 1904. The country wanted peace at any price. Official communiqués on the successful "readjustment" of the front line and the orderly "disengagement" of the army from contact with the enemy met with scornful derision. News of the enemy's gains was discussed in the streets with an undertone of relief. The worse the Russian military position in the Far East, the nearer the end of the war appeared. Nicholas II became the butt of bitter contempt. Revolt was rising out of the deep national humiliation.

The curtain raiser of the revolt came on Bloody Sunday—January 9, 1905—a day that became a watershed in Russia's history. I took no part in the events of that day, but it changed the whole course of my life. To explain its effect on me, a youth of nineteen, I must go back a bit.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN